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Grain in the Desert

It is curious that people most attached to the idea of freedom and most averse to becoming slaves should be bound and enslaved to the deterministic conception of history. Seeing that first there were little wars between cities, then wars, a little bigger, between states, then "world" wars between states situated on various continents, this theory predicts inevitable wars between entire continents, wars which will be superseded only when it becomes practical for dark skinned men to launch the vast, magnificent, but not even then the final war to extinguish the paler men of Europe and America. If it is to be like that, it is a tiresome story ending in defeat. Our freedom to fight is no more than a freedom to swim, lost in an ocean, until we drown.

We are accepting, here and now, in America, too readily this fate.

A nation, like a scientist, must explore every hypothesis, and America must guard itself against attack--by storing up the old fashioned atom bomb, the archaic supersonic rocket bomb, the quaint B-5600's. We must order the uniforms, drill our youth on the parade grounds of higher mathematics and physics. Under the elms, yes sir, no sir, about face, forward.

The Russians are nearly as old fashioned as we--but not quite. For at least they are exploring the possibilities under another hypothesis. By seduction and terrorism they are attempting to by-pass war, inviting the ever guileless, compelling the fearful, calling on the revolted, to enter a system whose promise of justice on earth they have already defiled. They have their old-fashioned armies, but they also have an idea, degraded, distorted, but still an idea. It is the memory, in crime, of universality. It is an appeal, lying and selfish, to man's persistent desire that the earth be made, finally, the instrument of his needs.

President Truman might have made his speech to Congress asking for the parade grounds and the guided missiles. Then he might have said: it looks as if we are thinking only of our own defense and, to some, as if we are accepting the idea of an inevitable war with Russia. But we also are thinking of something else. It looks as if we are still in the closed world of nationalisms, buying allies here and there for the primary purpose of safeguarding a particular nation the United States. Well, that is the way it has to look like under the hypothesis of war. But we are working also, simultaneously, under the hypothesis of peace. We have today set our atomic scientists at serious work. Within five years they promise results. Then we start reclaiming the African deserts, the Gobi desert, to make one the granary of Europe and all Africa inhabitable, to make the other serve China and Russia. That is what we are going to do with atomic energy. We are going to provide heat and light for every city in the world, locomotion and power. We are going to act as if there were no frontiers anywhere and make it so that for every man everywhere there will in fact be no frontiers. These plans of ours are not for our own profit or for our own power. Simply, we have the idea that they will save the world. We are implementing them now: "men at work: do not disturb." We are commited to them irrevocably. Because we mean, through them, to break out of an automatism that has lasted too long. That is what man is supposed to do with his mind.

& A Donkey

The offering of carrots presupposes the existence of the donkey: if he does not exist (as Voltaire said in another connection) we must invent him. That is, we must so indoctrinate the people, all the people, that they will be as frightened, as martial, as militant, or as feeble, as we will. Fear will rouse them, we cry, screaming headlines about submarines operating within five, or fifty, miles of our Pacific coast, when we know they have been doing just that for years, just as ours have....elsewhere. We must insult a distinguished Frenchwoman, to whom we had granted visa and passport, just to larn the Commies to be toads, and to show what dogs we are; we request professors with Wallace buttons please not to walk on the grass of the campus anymore; surely such premises are mistaken?

Our respect for the individual must be basic: it is crowns we should offer, for conquerors, so that, when, if, we have to fight, each one of us is perfectly prepared, not to explore caves, nor cry to the hills, cover us, but to do calmly whatever chores are required.

Carrots create, or coax out, as fear cudgels, the donkey in us all: total war requires the participation of every citizen, and in total war morale, as the Battles of Britain and of

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Stalingrad alike taught us, is all. If our war is only the struggle of a titanic capitalist, against hardly less gigantic a communist country, who will fight each other, kill & bury each other, then by all means bamboozle all the bankers with red letters, flutter the fainthearted with unimaginable fear. But if, as we believe, we fight for the whole tradition of Western civilization, for the survival of the individual as adumbrated by Aristotle and demonstrated by Christ, then let us, as adults, soberly and in the fear only of God, see to it that every single person is proud to be engaged in such a struggle. Pride is as valid an emotion as fear, and swollen heads are less perilous an occupational disease in soldiers than shaking shoes.

UN has just put out a 30-page summary of its achievements, much of which is heartening, as, for example, the fact that the General Assembly's resolution condemning all war propaganda was unanimously adopted; the fact that the International Children's emergency fund has received $11,000,000; and at this moment, four million children and nursing mothers are receiving a daily supplementary meal based on special protective foods, at 50,000 distribution points.

President Truman, in his latest speech, declared we stood foursquare on the principles of the United Nations Charter. Fear cannot be for us, nor used by us; it is only for such as deliberately withdraw from the main current of Western culture.

Winning Votes and Laying Foundations

The killing of two men near Milan is the first bloodshed in an Italian electoral campaign marked by mounting tension and fear as the crucial day approaches. The majority of the people do not, however, relish their role of having to decide the fate of the strategic Middle East, if not of Western Europe. The front dominated by the Communists and supported by the Nenni Socialists, who are so numerous and so strong in the trade unions, is the more vigorous and efficient of the two contestants; the Christian Democrats, although backed by the Church, have considerably less funds for electioneering, a weaker press and less political experience. And in addition to this swollen stream of the most violent electoral propaganda the Italian people are beset by heavy unemployment and an even more difficult struggle for existence than usual; they are also conscious that they are virtually defenseless in a military sense, with an aggressive enemy at their eastern gate.

With ten days between now and the election, and a whole month before the forming of the new government, are there besides maintenance of armed strength in the Mediterranean additional American or Anglo-French-American moves that would avail?

The joint demand for Trieste, said to have originated with the present Italian Government, is a straight appeal to Italian nationalism (partly as a counter to the Communist adoption of Garibaldi). It has proved effective, but under present conditions the port would be of little use. There are other straight election moves which might further check the Communists: a reminder that the Soviets have blocked Italian membership in the UN; the already announced intention of withholding ERP aid from a Communist-dominated Italy; a demand that the Italian peace treaty be revised.

But this last *demarche* has much to recommend it beyond its potential effectiveness in the April 18 election. The object of accepting the treaty negotiated by Secretary Byrnes and Senators Connally and Vandenberg a year ago and believed at the time to be the best we could get, was that heavy sacrifices were to be imposed on defeated Italy for the sake of reaching a somewhat satisfactory general settlement for Central Europe. We know now that this sacrifice, which The Commonweal opposed at the time, was unavailing.

In order to build a strong and peaceful Italy more must be done than the continuation of sizable emergency aid, the rehabilitation contemplated in the Marshall Plan, the restoration of the Italian merchant marine. Much can be done beside revision of the treaty. The current survey of American outlets for Italian handicrafts by Dr. Max Ascoli is one example. The plan for Bizonia to purchase Italian farm products is another. And the Franco-Italian customs union and importation of Italian labor makes some inroads on unemployment.

In addition, the treaty must be revised to permit resumption of Italian colonization in Libya, preferably under a UN trusteeship. The United States could raise its Italian immigration quota. The ceiling must be lifted on the size of the Italian armed forces, both to preserve order within the country and defend national borders. And Italy must be permitted to retain or construct certain border defenses. A comprehensive program including these and other measures would constitute far more than a series of good talking points in the impending election. It would serve as a long-term objective for a hard-pressed people.

Our April 2 issue failed to appear because of the strike in the printing trades. This reduced issue is the best feasible under present circumstances. All subscriptions will be extended one week.

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Italy Just Before

Erik von Kuechnelt-Leddihn

THE ITALIANS are a doubly anarchical nation--they are not only Catholics but also Latins--and so the regimentation of modern England would be quite unthinkable south of the Alps and would collapse overnight. Yet whatever the psychological reasons, the fact remains that Italy has thrown in her lot with a free economy and this decision involves not only obvious advantages but also certain risks. The gravity of these risks, under the circumstances, even the devoted friend of liberty should not underrate. The advantages are manifest in the unparalleled activity, in the feverish rebuilding of a country devastated by the war, and in the revival of manufacture. The Italian, it must be borne in mind, is not only a past master in enjoying his leisure but also an eager worker and a first rate craftsman. The working classes, moreover, are relatively well paid, yet the middle classes are financially very ill at ease, unemployment is particularly rife in white collar groups and the *basic problem of Italy's economy, the raw material situation, the trade balance and the over-population still await their solution.*

Fascism tried several remedies, some of them moral and some immoral, some of them were failures, and some were successful; the nature of the defeat and the concrete results of World War II were a definite setback in the struggle for necessarily higher living standards, and it seems today that the headaches of Mussolini and the Japanese militarists have been bequeathed to the State Department in Washington. Certainly the very least the Western Powers can do is to restore to Italy her colonies in which, after everything is said and done, her record is quite impressive. This can fairly be measured by the almost complete lack of vindictiveness on the part of the Ethiopians for their erstwhile conquerors. Yet what I am thinking of primarily is the slow, laborious and even heroic conquest of the desert in Libya through thousands of colonists, a toil for which the Arabs have shown little talent and enthusiasm. The Bedouin proverb "Thou wilt not reap the fruits of the palms thou hast planted" seems to find application in many of these unfortunates who, accompanied by their families, have been repatriated *en masse.*

The political conditions and tendencies have very little to do with the economic set-up of the country; man is a rather complex animal and he is neither a walking stomach adorned by pocket books and sex glands as some of our capitalist-communist simpletons would like to have it, nor is he that eternally reasoning monstrosity which we find in some of the writings of our almost equally primitive neo-thomist friends. Generalizations are especially difficult in case of the Italian who is fundamentally an esthete (things are *bello* or *brutto,* not "good" or "bad"), a sophisticated psychologist rather than a philosopher and, above all, an anarchist in his technique of life. When I mentioned this trait before, as characteristic of Catholic nations, I had the odd vision of all history and philosophy teachers in the Catholic colleges of America raising their eyebrows as far as the limits of their thinning scalps. But the fact remains that almost a hundred years ago Nathanael Hawthorne was struck by the individualistic behavior of the worshippers in St. Peter's, and today the visitor of Rome is equally impressed by the total lack of order and method in the traffic and in the public life of the Eternal City. Only the policeman on the Piazza Venezia is "on duty" all the time, and I doubt strongly that there are more than four traffic policemen simultaneously in service in the whole city. Aside from a red-green light on the Piazza Colonna I could not remember another contraption of that type. The number of cars, obviously, cannot compare with that of New York or even of Washington, D. C., but these vehicles of all makes and all countries zoom about with a breathtaking speed. I have seen in full daylight a brand new Alfa-Romeo shooting down at break-neck speed the Via di Ripetta; but I have also seen the mighty oxen from the Campagna with their characteristically wide horns being driven past the Piazza San Pietro. The pedestrians walk in the middle of the road, motor bicycles seem to have amplifiers to increase the infernal noise of their explosions, street vendors establish their stands in the most inopportune places and an enterprising owner of canvas-covered trucks has established bus-lines in which small boys act as "conductors."....

Still, in the political sphere, even the individualistic Italians have to compromise, and not every Italian can have his own party as he would undoubtedly like to have. On February 23d, the *Messagero* informed us that the number of political parties amounts, so far, to only ninety-nine. It can therefore easily be imagined with what misgivings, what inner malaise, what personal uneasiness, cynicism and mental reservations the Italian goes to the polls. He might work up a certain enthusiasm for a political leader, not because he agrees with his ideas, but because he thinks that as an artist in demagoguery he is unexcelled; his vote for him becomes some sort of theatrical

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applause. Thus his consent--the consent of a basically always unrepresented person--is of an esthetic rather than an ideological nature. The Italian's reaction (the pedestrian's, the driver's, the voter's) is almost instantaneous, and an actor's brilliant performance in the first three acts would not save him from catcalls in the fourth. It must be added that it would be a great mistake to believe that fascism, under these circumstances, was a paradoxical phenomenon in an anarchical society. Government-from-above is the price anarchical societies at all times have to pay for their individualism.

The Italians are great individualists and for this we have to admire them in a collectivistic age. They are true products of Catholic culture. They have remarkable personalities. Intellectually the Italian masses, as the masses of *all* other nations, are entirely immature, but any regime becoming really oppressive they would either ruin by a sly passive resistance or even by courageous open defiance. (Few things are sillier or more boring than the old tale of Italian cowardice, and being an Austrian I have the right to say so.) Yet all this does not cancel the fact that in the active choice of their representatives the reasons put forward by so many Italians are not "reasons based on reason" and on top of it all comes a startling ignorance of the very programs of the political parties.

The coming elections (April 18th) are of enormous importance--not only for Italy, but for the whole of Europe. The parliamentary situation is roughly as follows: on the Left we have a coalition of the communists, under Togliatti, and the vast majority of Socialists under Pietro Nenni. This coalition, paralleling those in Hungary and in Czechoslovakia, hopes firmly to gain an absolute majority, and then to transform Italy brutally into a communist state. Nenni is absolutely subservient to Togliatti, and such a victory, *which is distinctly within the range of possibility,* would have the most far-reaching results. The whole propaganda of the Leftist Parties is animated by a spirit of absolute confidence in victory. Actually neither their leaders nor their opponents have the slightest idea what is going to happen on April 18th and 19th. In Milano, a well equipped institute made a Gallup Poll asking a wide cross-section of the public which *two* men it thinks are best qualified to lead Italy. De Gasperi of the Demo-Christians won by a very wide margin, followed by Nitti, Togliatti, Nenni and Saragat. (The most popular team was De Gasperi with Saragat.) That's all very nice, but less reassuring is the fact that forty-eight percent of those questioned simply had no answer. It is this "grey zone" *(zona grigia)* which will in all likelihood decide the elections, and the *Blocco Popolare,* knowing this rather well, makes a huge effort of propaganda with the simplest slogans like "*Pane, Pace Lavoro!*" swamping cities and countryside with its emblem, the features of Garibaldi, appealing to the unthinking millions.

In the more sanguine and conservative South people generally expect the victory of the parties opposing Togliatti's and Nenni's *Blocco Popolare,* but in Rome, not to mention Milan Turin or Florence, the *grande peur* knaws at the heart of every anti-totalitarian. "Society" enjoyed the pre-Lenten season, throughly there was much merry-making and many brilliant gatherings remindful of the fact that it is easier to dance on a volcano than to sit down on it. The Popular Bloc, the "Socialcommunists," in the meantime is sitting pretty because it has the comforting alternative either of winning "democratically" at the elections, or of plunging the country into civil war. In case something should go wrong at the polls, it girds itself openly for the Night of the Long Knives. The present government has a very efficient Minister of the Interior, the Demo-Christian Scelba, who is a hard-hitting man with a large and tough police force. But the army, conveniently cut by the victors, would not be sufficient to cope with a greater emergency. So far, the huge confiscation of arms, and the cracking down on "para-military organizations," has been counterbalanced by a steady flow of arms arriving by plane from the "East." These are mostly American and British arms, once provided the former Italian Partisans who now belong largely to the Popular Bloc. The "Winning the War First!" policy is now paying its evil dividends, and one cannot help but remember the reactions of zealous female patriots at New York cocktail parties who, upon hearing doubts as to the wisdom of arming the totalitarian competitors of the late *Fuhrer,* shrieked hysterically that they were all right since they were "*killing* nazis."... Which only shows that the stratagems of pork butchers are not always statesmanlike.

The supporters of the *Blocco Popolare* now claim that Scelba's "Gestapo" consists largely of ex-fascists who have lost relatives through partisan activities and are thus eager to maltreat the only genuine democrats Italy has. This accusation may not be *entirely* unfounded but it is also quite certain that the human material of the police is above average; their looks, their speech, their manners betray an unexpected amount of education. They seem rather to belong to the white collar class and may have had letters of recommendation from their local priest before they applied for their jobs. In case the Left should win the elections one wonders what would happen to them.

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I have asked repeatedly the question as to the personal reactions of individuals in case of

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a Leftist victory which implies full Muscovite domination. I have addressed this question with special emphasis and seriousness to all those who belong to parties which are democratic in a Western sense. This, it must be borne in mind, is a crucial question whose reply gives us the answer to the query whether Italy has a sound, *lebensfahig* democracy--or whether the hippocratic traits of all post-war Continental democracy are here again clearly discernible. The reaction was invariably to the effect that such a terrible calamity could not be faced with equanimity. Pressing the question, as to what one could do, in concrete terms, after a Leftist victory at the polls, most people shrugged their shoulders and then gave a hesitant answer which nevertheless indicated a complete departure from constitutional law and procedure.

The younger ones, especially active young Catholics, were more outspoken and hinted that they would take their rosaries, medals and submachine guns and mount the roofs, whereas the women were inclined to face more meekly the age-old call: *Christianos ad bestias!* (The colosseum is still "wide open.") The trouble is only that the mounting of the roof-tops with rosaries and automatic arms is not a *living* Christian tradition. Temperamentally, it would be in character with certain Mediterranean traditions, but, I am sorry to say, the mounting of the roof-tops with *mitra,* but without devotional objects, is a better established custom.

Yet, whatever the outcome of the elections, and even discounting the possibility of armed coups, one has to ask oneself whether a parliamentary system is tolerable, sensible or humanly bearable when almost one-half (or at least a good third) of the citizenry is capable of voting for parties which deny the basic liberal principles, serve the interest of a foreign country and let it be known that they would crush (preferably by constitutional means) all opposition once in power. Communists in power, tolerating an opposition, would, one has to admit, act as perversely as self-confessed liberals persecuting those who disagree with them. This dilemma is not new but in the United States it has a certain actuality. In Italy, it is a question of life and death. Harold Laski is right in insisting that a parliamentary democracy works only if the parties--preferably only two--have the same common philosophical denominator and, in their "dialogue," use the same frame of reference. This situation prevails neither in Italy, nor in any other of the Catholic or Greek-Orthodox nations. Even in such countries of mixed religion as Germany, or Latvia, parliamentarianism was always an institution in precarious health (especially since the former became a republic). Bireligious Holland, a republic since its independence in the sixteenth century luckily developed, after 1815, a strong monarchical tradition.

I have spoken with quite a number of older and younger thinkers about the basic political problems of Italy. The full *impasse* of the whole situation becomes clear when we see the sterility and the scepticism of *some* of their reactions. I have in mind particularly a leading Italian liberal theorist of the Croce school who sees very accurately the whole situation, but knows of no way out. "We have to try democracy again," he pleads. "We are fed up with fascism. A strong monarchy is unthinkable. There is really *nothing else we can do.*" Another, is certain that true liberalism cannot rely any more on parliamentary democracy. An alternative? He knows of none. The professed members of the Liberal Party are, significantly enough, monarchists almost to a man, but they comprise a small elite and their party has restricted support. (On the other hand one of the monarchist parties is committed to socialism.)

One has only to watch the people who buy *Unita* (and *Avanti!*) in order to understand more fully the decay which has set in--not only in Italy but everywhere else--and the degrading and corroding effects of fear. There are, to my personal knowledge, a lot of extremely ugly cases of "Thyssens in reverse," of people who by their education, background and leanings could not possibly harmonize with the red creed yet nevertheless actively support the P.C.I. guided by the principle that "*la garde se rend mais elle ne meurt pas,*" a phrase made famous by Baron Alfred Steiger, supervisor of the Soviet theaters in Moscow. The sensitive art expert with his luxurious home, the lyrical landowner living in a palazzo near Venice, the dandyfied *gourmet* who promenades on the Corso Umberto--they all want to live, to live securely, and this they seek to achieve by working openly for the Communist Party--though I have a sneaking suspicion that they vote secretly for the Right. They are morally a great deal lower than our imbecile conservatives who, in their stupidity and historical illiteracy, did not hesitate to degrade themselves by licking up the vomit of French Revolution, applauding enthusiastically conscription and ethnic nationalism, illiberalism and militarism. The Italian "spiv" who smokes American cigarettes, eats *pasta* made of American flour, enjoys the busrides on American gasoline, feeds his imagination with American movies, puts Kreml on his wavy hair and shaves with Barbasol (all obtainable in Italy) would have to go without these luxuries in a Red Italy, but he sheds crocodile tears over the treachery of the clericals who want to sell his dear fatherland to American millionaires. The decline of political thinking in Italy no less than anywhere else in this world, amazes by its almost limitless perversity.

The anticollectivists in Italy still bank on the votes of the "Solid South," but they have to admit that the communists have made dangerous inroads in the regions south of Rome, and

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even in Sicily, where, just as in France, they have gained many adherents among the farmers--of all people. Unlike the Socialists, they have cleverly abstained from outright anti-clericalism and have, quite naturally, never breathed a word about their ultimate agrarian program.

★

Politically, Italy is more of a madhouse than either Austria or Germany because fascism has lasted so much longer than nazism or the *Anschluss*. Apart from some human fossils and a few middle aged men there's nothing left but the Church, and the leaders of the underground who belong to a notoriously unbalanced and radical type of *homo sapiens*. (Contrary to all notions of Hollywood Resistance films, the average chartered accountant with four children, or the sedate greengrocer did not, with a smirk, grab the breadknife from the kitchen in order to cut the throat of the nearest German sentinel while piously murmuring the Preamble of the Declaration of Independence.) Fascism has left a big psychological hole, and the disappearance of the House of Savoy has emphasized the break in the historical continuity of a politically young nation. It is generally agreed that the same mobs who cheered Mussolini on the Piazza Venezia, cheered the King on July 25, 1943, cheered the picture of the dictator's corpse in the newspapers, and now cheers Togliatti and Nenni. Little does it matter that they had tongue in cheek each time; the fact remains that fascism was a complete system, with a certain amount of security and regularity; that it employed a lot of drones, that it did a prodigious amount of building, and tickled many vanities, that decidedly it left a specific and lasting imprint on the country, and that Mussolini, at least for a decade, had the conditional support of a vast part of a nation. Let us also be honest and admit today in retrospect that, as far as tyrants go, he was one of the most human. As a faithful reporter I have to add that many genuine liberals criticised the earlier period of his rule, with marked restraint, and that a one-man-rule, with a strong hand does not provoke the condemnation as Americans might expect. Still the consensus was general that never again should even a strong man be given *carte blanche* and that there ought to be a constitutional possibility of removing him when he loses his balance or his wits. How? That was never specified.

It is on the disappearance of many totalitarian features, which had (subconsciously or consciously) grown dear to the masses, that the communists bank quite heavily. Now, more than ever, they are engaged in an all-out drive to win over the fascists, and they publish a middle-brow periodical which is just to serve that one purpose. The fascist die-hards are now assembled in the M.S.I. and there are also unmistakable signs of a revival of a straight and probably also a philofascist nationalism, nourished largely by the stipulations of the senseless peace treaty, and supported by its human victims. The Italians would have certainly forgotten the South-Tyrol if it had been returned to Austria, but they will not forget Trieste, that new Danzig on the Adriatic, nor that part of the Littoral round Gorizia for which they fought twelve exhausting battles in 1915-1917, nor their colonies and, least of all, Western Istria which has conveniently been handed over to the Great Yugoslav Democracy, and whose refugees crowd Italian cities while those who stayed on are jailed or butchered. Half a dozen violently nationalistic weeklies are already beating the drum of revenge, and the fact that these forces today amount to very little and play a minor role in the coming election, is in itself not reassuring. Wait until Italy completely awakes from her stupor! On top of it all comes the wanton destruction of Italian cities by Allied flyers--mostly American--and the material and moral effects of the Allied campaign in Italy. (I could tell you nice tales about the behavior of the Moroccans who over here did not, as in Spain, rape on behalf of clerico-fascist landowners but for the greater glory of a democratic "One World.") As to the wanton destruction one has only to take the train (with cattle cars) to Tivoli to see a thoroughly ravaged city with the Villa d'Este and the Cathedral towering alone above a grey mass of rubble.

From these fatal errors not the neo-fascists and Qualunquists but the *Blocco Popolare* draws the greatest profit, because it represents today most clearly anti-American feelings. Its armed men are the ones who dream of the day they can fire on landing American Marines with American guns and American ammunition. To these sad facts they add colossal lies, gigantic distortions and the most perverse ratiocinations. Take alone the brazenness of using the features of Garibaldi as an emblem. (Of course, the Bundists in America paraded large pictures of Washington and the communists those of Abraham Lincoln.) The Nenni-Socialists are even a few degrees more dishonest than the communists, and Signor Nenni's wholehearted collaboration with the communists is the most sinister detail in the whole Italian picture. This sinister detail is, nevertheless, not entirely illogical; I am personally convinced that the communists are, from the Marxian point of view, far more "orthodox" than the Socialists, and the objections a Socialist could raise against the communists (and therefore also against collaboration with the communists) would have to be largely of a non-Marxian nature. I doubt strongly that Marxism represents a humanism of any sort, though some people try to prove it by the most unconvincing dialectic contortions. Yet humanism is such a strong intellectual force in Europe that

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few thinking persons can entirely abstract themselves from its influence. Today, when all humanistic values are menaced, many Socialists were compelled to make a choice between their Marxian orthodoxy and their humanism; this choice was not often a clear-cut one in a purely intellectual sense. Still, it is absolutely clear that the Socialists *qua Socialists* have few, if any reasons to throw in their lot with the "capitalist West" rather than with the U.S.S.R. They could postpone the realization of their economic blueprints only as men believing that there are higher values than those of a purely economic order, and some of them actually accepted the Christian statement that man does not live by bread alone. In practically all Western countries the Socialists (or Social-Democrats) have decided to reject immediate solutions and to wait in order to build a *free* socialist society. This we may believe to be a *contradictio in adiecto,* but many who think differently on that score are at present none the less in our camp. Nenni's Socialists form a mass party, the P.S.I., while Saragat's P. S. L. I. which has gained the support of men like Lombardi, young Matteotti and Ignazio Silone has entered de Gasperi's coalition government. Yet the *saragatisti* have ceased to be orthodox Marxists and many of them reject Marxism outright. While sticking to their socialist creed they have decided for humanism and as humanists they cooperate, quite logically and organically with the *democristiani.* To the Marxist pundits this means betrayal of a basic "religious" concept and for the broad masses these "higher mathematics" mean nothing. The *saragatisti* are thus primarily recruited from middle-brow and high-brow layers and, unfortunately, in election mathematics this implies a great numerical weakness.

All this brings us to the *democristiani* who to a certain extent are the heirs of the liberal traditions of Gioberti. Their emblem is a crusader's shield with a cross bearing the inscription LIBERTAS. Their leader, de Gasperi, is like so many of Europe's political figures--a former Austrian citizen. He is of middle-age, a good speaker and a profoundly honest and sincere man.

The rise of his party, the largest so far, in Italy is, with her anticlerical traditions, quite miraculous but on the other hand, also entirely natural; in Italy, as in the rest of Europe itself, there is nothing left but the bipolarity of the Kremlin and the Vatican, the Pentagram and the Cross. (Still, the Italian communists never use the five-pointed star because it also stands for the U.S. Army and the Monarchy. The new Italian coat-of-arms, slightly resembling that of Tito's Yugoslavia is a hopeless and unhistorical concoction.)

The *democristiani* probably comprise the majority of the Christian minority of Italy. (The Christians *everywhere* are a minority and this fact has to be fully grasped in order to understand the present crisis; statistics based on baptismal certificates don't lead us anywhere near the truth.) They rely on the support of a good number of the younger generation, and nobody who watched the seemingly endless columns of Demo-Christians marching in Rome to the Basilica di Massenzio to hear a speech by de Gasperi, could fail to be impressed by the spirit and demeanor of these radiant and chanting masses.

There were very few women among these demonstrating "clericals," and there was a quality in their party hymn, sung over and over again, which moved me deeply. It had the sadness but not the fanaticism of the *Horst-Wessel-Lied* and, although I could not properly understand the text (the words *Love, Fatherland and Death* alone were clearly distinguishable) I wondered in what spirit they might repeat this hymn a few months hence. The Basilica di Massenzio, where they gathered, overlooks the *Via Sacra* on the *Foro Romano* along which the Saints were dragged from the Mamertinian jail to the Colosseum. Today Rome has practically lost this character of a "City of the Past;" yesterday, today and tomorrow, seem interlocked, and 2,000 years, after all, can be nothing but a strange interlude.

The other parties opposing the Social-Communists are not too interesting. Giannini of the *Uomo Qualunque,* a most theatrical person, once considered the Second Mussolini, curiously enough, has allied himself with Francesco Nitti, who enjoys a considerable moral prestige. The "Republican Party," and the newly-created Mazzinian Party, are just oddities; their roots are in the old, anti-clerical and republican tradition of the Left of the *Risorgimento.* The alliance of the *Partito Repubblicano Italiano* with de Gasperi, in itself an amusing monstrosity, can only be explained by the Red menace.

★

The dialogue between the visitor to Rome and the Eternal City itself is, in this year of Our Lord, not too comforting. The shadows of the frightening lottery expected in a few weeks not only darkened over the city but also evoked constantly echoes from the past. Words like "arena," "catacombs," "exile," and even names like Nero, or Diocletian, arouse quite different reflexes and reactions in the mind of a *modern* European than in that of an American. Yet Rome is overwhelming after a long absence.

There is a great and terrible lesson to be learned in Rome where we get an introduction to what Jacques Chardonne calls *les terribles verites chretiennes.* One of these is the absolute frailty of everything human and man-made. Another one is the innate hostility of this world to the essence of Christianity and the uncomfortable Christian demands. Without falling downright into Manichaeism, we must be careful not to let a cheap optimism creep into our ways

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of looking at this life or to overvalue the effectiveness of the *anima naturaliter christiana*. People enjoyed the most nauseating spectacles in the Colosseum for almost a quarter of a millenium. But the decay and perishableness of everything visible also fills the Christian with an earthly, and even with a legitimate, sadness because he also is a human being of body and soul; we only behold miserable fragments of the vanished beauty of ancient Rome, and its passing must have broken the heart of many of its contemporaries, mostly Christian in faith. With soul and body we are attached to the glories of this visible world, and one has to shudder when one realizes the menace which hangs over this agonizing continent, still bleeding from a thousand wounds inflicted by the last struggle and already facing enormous calamities once again, immense destructions, fantastic collapses.

★

If we have the doubtful privilege of surviving physically, the deadly earthquakes to come, the parting from all this earthly beauty and glory, though highly salutary from an ascetic point of view, will be sheer torture. There is even a danger that the Christian "nudity" of a tomorrow which we might have to spend in jail, in exile, in the "hills" or among disintegrating ruins, will not only freeze our bones but also our souls. The Neo-Vandals are at our gates and they are by no means represented by a single race, a single party, a single group. They are even within the walls, in our midst. The Vandals of old were not very funny and not very romantic, and when we consider the ways we might have to give witness to the truth we will even find that those who were dragged along the *Via Sacra*, and who suffered together in all publicity, were dying with a greater "moral effect" than our deaths will achieve. Even if not killed secretly, we will not die "officially" *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*, but for opposing "real democracy," and for having "sold" ourselves to Bethlehem Steel and General Motors.

The persecution of the Jews was probably only a forerunner of the persecution of those who have the plenitude of the faith. A marble plate at the Trappist monastery of *Tre Fontane*, where Saint Paul was beheaded, tells of the gratitude of two of the many Jews who were concealed there dressed in cowls during the worst nazi persecution. But where will the Christians go?

When we emerge from the catacombs and the darkness of the churches we face again the pulsating life of Italy. At least church buildings like those of S. Maria sopra Minerva and S. Clemente, erected over deserted or ruined temples tell us symbolically that the final victory will be ours. Little *ought* it matter whether we live to see or not. And walking through the busy streets of Rome the illusion that all is well and happy is almost overwhelming. We forget that the comfortable picture of priest and communist collaborating enthusiastically, as offered to us by "Open City," is a thing of the past. (There, on the newsstands, are copies of *Don Basilio* fresh from the press.) But even this detail does not wholly destroy the illusion, and what could be more peaceful and reassuring than the panorama of the Eternal City from Trinita dei Monti, or the fountain on the Pincio with the sun vanishing in a blaze of red hues behind St. Peter's. Moreover even in the shadow of complete tyranny there is this air of absolute liberty and carefreeness which finds little expression in speeches, editorials and high-sounding documents, a freedom in a deeper sense unknown to anyone who has not lived in a Catholic country, and which is lacking in no Catholic nation however debased by a temporary slavery.

Still, in sharp profile against these assurances and consolations the words of Saint Jerome are terribly alive again: *"Orbis ruit!"* The earth is in commotion.

The whole view from the Pincio may be radically altered tomorrow, or after-tomorrow, and the Holy Father instead of residing in the Vatican might be locked up in that grim jail which bears the odd name of *Regina Coeli*. The *absolute* impenetrability of the future (personal and otherwise) is the most characteristic aspect of our existence over here. Will we see Rome again? Soon? Ever? In coinless Italy I had not even a chance to fling a piece of money into the *Fontana Trevi* which is said to assure a return to the Eternal City. And if it is a complete night into which we all are sailing then the words of Goethe should be taken to heart:

The day has not yet passed away
And our time to act runs short
Soon will the dark night have its sway
When every striving comes to naught.

Which is a miserable translation of:

Noch ist es Tag, da ruhre sich der Mann;
Die Nacht tritt ein, wo niemand wirken kann.

Books

All Manner of Men. Malcolm Ross. Reynal. $3.50.

This is "horsmandering" at its best--horsmandering being a derivative of a verb which "Mike" Ross coins to describe the genre in which his excellent survey of the American racial crisis can be most aptly classified. ("To horsmander: to explain extensively in writing; particularly applied to the writings by which government officials attempt to rationalize their actions." Derived from Daniel Horsmander, Recorder of the City of New York, who, as one of the trial judges, published in 1744 an account of the 1741 anti-Negro terror in New York.)

"All Manner of Men," when stripped to its naked bones, is a calmly persuasive argument in favor of a

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permanent FEPC with statutory authority and sanctions --an argument which is built upon Mr. Ross's experience as successor to Bishop Haas in the chairmanship of the war-time (and teethless) FEPC.

Mike Ross has every right, humanly speaking, to be cynical and embittered. On the contrary, however, he is the most patient and optimistic of men in arguing for the permanent revival of an experiment in justice which it was his thankless assignment to administer for three years and then to bury without ceremony or flowers. He has every right, humanly speaking, to despise forever that clique of Congressional demagogues--vulgar men, all of them--who hounded his every step and whose only saving grace is their honesty in openly admitting, for even the Russians to hear, that they believe in White supremacy. But he doesn't waste any time arguing with the demagogues. Instead, he appeals over their heads to that inbetween group of Southern liberals who believe in equality of economic opportunity but can't quite bring themselves round to admitting the reasonableness of enforcing it by legislation--men like Dabney, Ethridge, Hodding Carter, and Congressman Hays. He suggests, ever so tactfully, that what people of this type need, to round out their thinking on the legitimate function of corrective legislation in a democracy, is the wholesome experience "of living close to the workers of the South." He's probably correct.

I find it difficult to describe Mr. Ross's literary style. Perhaps I can best describe it by indicating what it isn't. It isn't strident; it isn't doctrinaire; it isn't self-righteous; it isn't bludgeoning in its impact. It isn't Max Lerner or Freda Kirchwey. It comes close to being "literature" --as contrasted with the run-of-the-mine journalese which usually characterizes the prosaic memoirs of departed bureaucrats.

"Literature" alone, of course, isn't going to give us an FEPC. But it can certainly help. At least it can help to create a climate of opinion in which the thoroughly un-Christian racism of North, South, East and West will be recognized as a serious sin, which, like other sins which cry to heaven for the vengeance of God, can be restrained in its vicious effects, if not eliminated from the hearts of men, by means of constructive legislation.

It is to be hoped that American Catholics will take the lead in pushing vigorously for effective legislation to eliminate an evil which is at once a serious violation of justice and charity. "All Manner of men" will provide them with all the material they need for study clubs and for intelligent letters to their congressmen.

GEORGE G. HIGGINS.

A Mask for Privilege: Anti-Semitism in America. Carey McWilliams. Little. $2.75.

Carey McWilliams, author of other books on racism and religious prejudices has attempted in this work to make anti-Semitism in America a type of economic discrimination wherein the immigrants of Scotch-Irish descent set out to make it pretty uncomfortable for persons of Jewish descent. Of course, the Scotch-Irish have been aided and abetted by the people of English descent, the German folk, and almost everybody else, the author indicates, including the Negroes in a Georgia jail in 1913.

The title of the book is a good one, and the overall framework can be said to have great possibilities

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.f adequately developed. But this book is not eighty, historical writing. To place the start of nti-Semitism in America with the Saratoga Springs, I. Y., incident in 1871 is like starting American iterature with Longfellow, and with the author's ssertion that the Negro problem in America did not egin until Negroes were freed from chattel slavery.

The book is certainly written for the type of *esolute* public which usually finds within the confines of the lecture hall, an outlet for all its assions for social justice--for the type of humanity hat would sanction the sale of a slave, the story oes, in order to raise funds for African missions.

Hence, if you are already convinced of a great ocial wrong being done the Jews, then this bookwill ot disturb your determination. Yet, if you want a tronger foundation than the listing of the *Dearborn ndependent,* Henry Ford's contribution to journalistc trash; the Saratoga Springs incident, the Leo rank lynching in an area where everybody who was ot white and Gentile was catching the devil with is morning breakfast, then you must turn to Arnold . Toynbee to get the firmer convictions of the nonew in matters regarding the Jew--who is our spiritual father, if you are willing to admit it.

You will be disappointed also, if you turn to his book in search of light on the present-day roblems of Palestine, a subject that certainly has ts repercussions in America, especially in presentlay Washington, where both parties want to hold the hetto vote along with the vote of the Southern overnors, the reactionaries, and the vote of the Ku lux Klan.

For some reason, the author glides over this Palstine question rather neatly, it seems. It is probbly a safer venture to denounce the late Huey Long, erald L. K. Smith, MerwinK. Hart, and other persons ho have spouted-out the characteristic phrases of he lily-whites, the pure whites, and the white folk enerally, who have taken the belief to their hearts hat they themselves are God's Chosen People.

If you long for a discussion on Russian policy owards Palestine and Jewish migration out of Russia, ou just will not get it, although it does affect merica and its attitude towards Jews today. As a op, however, this reviewer notes that you will find n the chapter called "The Yellow Myth," the reflecton of Jean-Paul Sartre who wrote that the antiemite "is a man who is afraid."

GEORGE STREATOR.

iberia. Charles Morrow Wilson. William Sloane ssociates. $3.75.

frica in many ways is the continent of paradoxes. ne of these paradoxes is that the very land that saw o much of the white man's enslavement of his fellowan should have seen also the birth and growth of the ne African nation that has undertaken the heroic exeriment of democracy; for West Africa, in which the epublic of Liberia is situated, is the territory rom which most of the enslaved Negroes were brought o the United States.

The mention of Liberia brings to the mind a somber ecollection of political tyranny, governmental abuse nd many other anomalies. Yet, as the author rearks: "Liberia is essentially and habitually a naion of peace; a republic which has never suffered a evolution or a major civil war; which has never imeached or violently deposed a president; which has ever had a president or a national leader who was not lawfully elected to office."

Liberia is but a dot on the vast continent of Africa; but any part of the dark continent is related to the whole. And Africa today is far from being the plague spot that it was when it was visited by Jehudi Ashmun and his wife Mary in 1822. Ashmun promptly discovered that at least a third of the previous 114 settlers had died of fevers; and the subsequent history of decades was in accordance with that original experience. Yet Africa today is developing into the world's garden spot and is the great laboratory of world agriculture. One of the most important lessons of that agriculture is the discovery that the cultivation of a specialized nonfood commercial crop such as rubber can be made to be an active agent in the development of good products and of the satisfaction of local human needs.

To many it will be a surprise that the Firestones, owing to the restrictions on non-Africans in Liberia, do not own a single foot of property. Liberia's production of natural rubber now includes groves planted and owned by approximately 140 citizen farmers of Liberia, and each year sees an increase in the total of natural rubber produced by civilian farmers. Hevea rubber is now soundly established as a citizen crop of Liberia and holds great promise for the future.

Liberia's educational accomplishments are remarkable and impressive, but equally impressive are the gaps that remain to be filled. The Republic does remain predominantly an institution of the Coast, but its executive branch is directly responsible for "law and order, for life and limb, for weal or woe" of the peoples of the interior. Significantly, Liberia is not a dictatorship and shows no symptoms of becoming one.

Mr. Wilson's book is evidently in the nature of public relations for Liberia, not a critical estimate; but in its class it is competently done, pleasantly illustrated, and with many excellent passages on the picturesque diversity of African life. As one of the native characters remarks: "We go softly-softly. But we never lef' it. Liberia no finny." "Liberia" is recommended for any working bookshelf on Africa.

JOHN LAFARGE.

The Sleepwalkers. Hermann Broch. Pantheon. $5.00.

Hermann Broch's "The Sleepwalkers" is a trilogy presenting the disintegration of modern European society. The first part studies a landed aristocracy imbued with militarist traditions and a defined sense of family and public responsibility. The second part takes one into the world of the worker, the entrepreneur, and the bourgeoisie of the years preceding the First World War. The last shows wide areas of German society crumbling under the impact of that war.

Judged by the standards which are ordinarily applied to fiction, "The Sleepwalkers" can hardly be accounted successful. Of the narrative portion one must report that much is tedious and much is ponderous, and one never finds in characters that tantalizing combination of uniqueness and universality which is the mark of true creation. One misses above all an organic unity of development in the story as a whole. The author, by styling his work "an essay in philosophy," seems to have shown more sense than some of his critics.

It cannot be denied that "The Sleepwalkers" is philosophically exciting. Mr. Broch has had the

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boldness to interpolate long passages of philosophical disquisition, including one on epistemology. He should be recognized for whatever success can be credited to this audacious maneuver. The result does not, in the opinion of this reviewer, make a good novel of ideas, but a novel within which important and essentially interesting ideas are sandwiched.

The author sees modern man as victim of what might be termed the Demon of the Abstract. This demon appears in the form of a logic divorced from content. An unconditioned logic is a force of extreme virulence, for the effect of this force is to set up separate autonomies, each of which, at the dictate of its logic, drives ruthlessly toward a delimited goal. Periods in which the human being possessed spiritual anchorage tolerated no such exclusiveness of aim and operation. The medieval merchant knew nothing of the adage, "Business is business," for it was obvious to him that business impinged upon all areas of experience. The medieval artist knew nothing of art for art's sake, and the medieval soldier did not think of war as being justified by its own technical brilliance. The acknowledgment that each activity was in the service of something larger gave the era its style, and style is a sign that logic and content have achieved a balance.

The disintegration of a society is always foreshadowed by this split between reason and content. Among its consequences is the appearance of an autonomous reality which is no longer capable of submitting to the deductive system. We have witnessed this in the major alteration of our own cosmogony,

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since now "cosmogony no longer bases itself on God, but on the eternal continuance of inquiry, or the consciousness that there is no point at which we can stop." In other words, our age has substituted for truth an endless inquiry predicated on the assumption that truth is unattainable. The emerging anti-deductive reality turns out to be a reality of death.

Mr. Broch sees the salvation of mankind in a peculiarly difficult ideal of freedom, a freedom in which the rational and the irrational come together under the sanction of an "over-arching and majestic Being." It is the quest of this freedom which justifies the continued rebirth of humanity.

Such paraphrase scarcely does justice to the richness with which the concepts are developed. Even though the author failed to make a highly functional use of his ideological passages, one may admire the magnitude of his conception, and the profoundity of his reach. "The Sleepwalkers" is the work of an intellect of the first order.

RICHARD M. WEAVER

Memoirs of a Secret Agent of Free France: The Silent Company, Volume 1: June, 1940-June, 1942. Remy. Whittlesey. $4.00.

In June of 1940 when France had fallen and the Germans were about to enter his town, a man called Gilbert Renault Roulier fled to England to continue the fight, he knew not how or where. Like others, he had left behind wife and children. Two months later, equipped with a code and his own ingenuity, he returned, via Spain, with instructions from de Gaulle's *Deuxieme Bureau* to get information through to England.

From this simple, amateurish beginning grew a network of secret service that covered the entire French seaboard, and most of France; a system that was greatly feared by the Germans and which, with utmost peril to itself always, continued systematically to bring invaluable and decisive information to the English. "From March, 1941," for instance, Remy says, "until June, 1942, at a period when the base and port of Bordeaux played an extremely important part in the war, from Bordeaux to Verdun, nothing, *absolutely nothing* worth knowing, was unknown to the Allies." The C.N.D. was the name of the network--La Confrerie de Notre Dame--and I am sure they enjoyed Our Lady's blessing. Hurt often through the arrests of vital members, betrayed at times by her own men, it was yet the only network that was not wiped out entirely by the Gestapo. This was only because of the refusal of all the men captured, without exception, to reveal any information under torture or questionings. Often they know enough to wipe out the entire network. Remy says after the war, "it is to my friends who are dead, my friends who were tortured, my friends who were deported, my friends who would not speak, that I owe the fact that my children's laughter was not stifled in their throats..... Their laughter is made up of the silence that my friends kept."

In the book we follow the footsteps of Renault alias Remy, Jean Luc, Raymond, Morin, etc., from the time he re-enters France until his temporary escape to England in 1942. From day to day we watch the growth of the network, live through the fears and joys and setbacks. It is a photographic insight into the country, the task, the faith and heroism of the times. Written as a report and either poorly translated or merely copied from notes in spots, some of both no doubt, it is for this all the more overwhelming and real. It is very great heroism written in an unheroic, matter of fact and modest way. And that is the kind of men they were. As Maurice Schumann says in his introduction, "there is nothing less French than any claim to exceed the common lot of humankind. There is nothing more French than the determination to be truly human." This is the great interest of the book, the heroism of these unheroics, these daily citizens. And it makes a much greater impression in its humility than a smooth and better worded tale.

ANN HUNTER

The Christ of Catholicism. Dom Aelred Graham. Longmans. $4.00.

The humble approach to the Gospel story of Our Lord is indicated by the author's use of the subtitle "A Meditative Study," but his critical acumen appears at once in his acquaintance with and wide use of the best Catholic scholars (and non-Catholics) and in his provision of appendices of scriptural passages, bibliography, and index. His style is clear and succinct. His reliance on the Thomistic framework of dogma and his quotations from the Fathers re-enforce the conclusions of his own study and prayer. The going is rather hard at first--so packed with solid doctrine is every page, but the ease of style helps one forward and the gathering momentum of incisive truth finally sweeps one on into admiration for the Person of Christ Who fits in so organically with the vital needs of man. This Study will belong beside the commentaries made by scholars, adding to them the devotional interpretations which excite piety and the timely import of the Gospel for everyday living.

The first chapters give the most significant phases and events of Christ's life. These represent about one-third of the book. The rest of the book is taken up by lengthy chapters on The Personality of Jesus, The Divine Redeemer, and The Incarnation. The treatise on the Personality is masterful. "We grow in stature in proportion as we unite ourselves intimately with God and efface our personalities before Him." "God tends to give Himself as much as possible to man...the perfect man tends to unite himself as much as possible to God." The discussion of the Mystical Body relies much on the late Encyclical of the Holy Father and is an excellent treatment of the subject. For the ordinary reader these fine chapters may be a little difficult, but if they are read slowly and meditated upon they will throw a great light on the passages of Holy Scripture which they seek to explain. The author has a steady and certain touch. He has written a commentary instinctive with life; "its appeal will be rather to the mind than to the heart, or more exactly, to the heart through the mind.

RICHARD FLOWER

Government and Liberty, The American System. William Beard. Halcyon House. $2.00.

William Beard, son of the famous Charles A. and Mary Ritter Beard, interpreters of liberal America par excellence, has written a popularized survey of the American system of government in simple, readable, plain English which should serve the general

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reader and the beginning college student in American Government. Moreover, this book offers a key to the American system of constitutional and practical government for a foreigner who would seek enlightenment as he attempts to gauge past and current administrative policies, diplomatic programs and political ventures. There is lacking the punch and vigor, the straight-forward liberalism and the partisan attitude toward reform of the old House of Beard. It is informative, comprehensive in small bulk, and sound in its prediction upon wide reading and a full understanding of the structure, purposes, problems, and difficulties of government at the various national and parochial levels. It is too generalized and too simplified for a college text. Unfortunately the high schools use civics books which are so socialized that they contain little information on our constitution and government and much upon matters which should be settled in Christian doctrine classes. Hence a simple account of our system of government will hardly fit that curriculum area, in the words of an educationalist. For teachers of government and general readers, Dr. Beard's survey can be recommended.

Government grows more interesting as it touches every man's life from the cradle to the grave and afterward if he accumulates a competence. Not only 600,000 persons as in 1930 or 3,000,000 in the depths of the war, but a good half of the American population actually works for the government--at least as tax gatherers. As the bureaucrats sing:

You make it, we take it;
You lend it, we spend it.

The author sees no danger in the public debt; federal, state, county, and municipal, if no crisis comes. In this he may be right.

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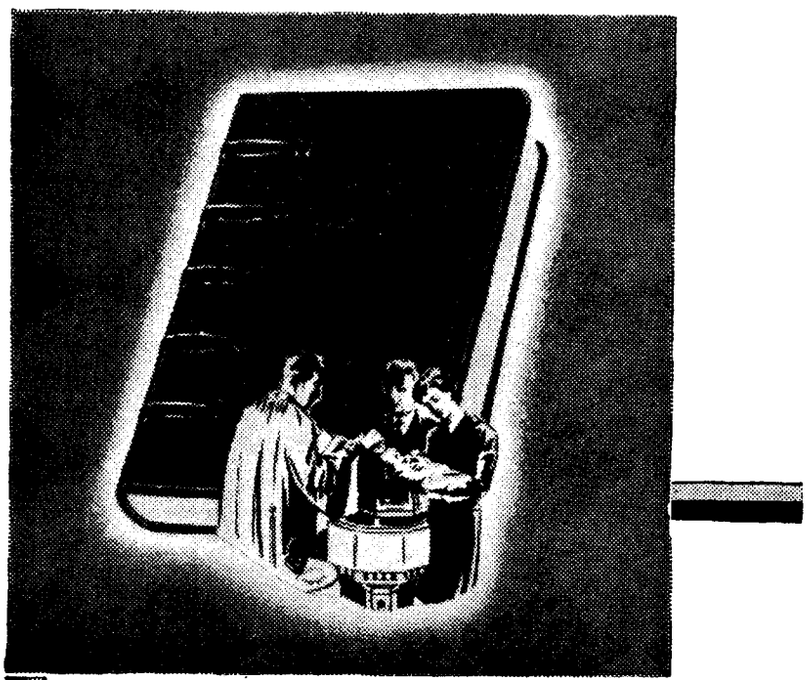

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